Meeting Standards for Technology Leadership While at Lamar

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The Comprehensive Examination is the culmination of the Lamar graduate program for the Masters in Educational Technology Leadership. I intend to include information about my goals statements for my position and educational technology leadership. Incorporated within the comprehensive exam discover an articulated educational technology vision. I will explicate the knowledge gained from the program including the six courses during my degree program that were the most beneficial to my career. Throughout my comprehensive examination, reflection occurs upon the Lamar graduate degree program. At the conclusion of the exam, I will include my professional development plan and my curriculum vitae.

**Position and Leadership Goal**

Finalizing a degree of Masters in Technology Leadership has encompassed many areas of interest for my profession. I am currently in my fifteenth year in education. For the last ten years, I have held the position of campus instructional technology specialist. Currently, I am a campus instructional technologist for Highland Park ISD at University Park Elementary. The Masters program at Lamar through Academic Partnership has been extremely valuable for my current career and has also prepared me to take on more roles in leadership for my district. I appreciate the Masters program’s focus on administrative leadership since being a leader in technology is more than knowing software programs. As a leader we must understand the focus on education for the 21st Century Learner and Educator. I want to encourage children to recognize that education continues throughout our lives. The program through Lamar has encouraged me to learn and apply new and innovative ideas. Using technology is not the goal. Our goals must be to ensure the success of the students and to assist teachers in fulfilling their goals as a facilitator to their students. Technology enhances the road to success.

**Vision of Educational Technology**

My goals as technology leader closely align with the viewpoints expressed in *The NMC Horizon Report: K-12* (Johnson, Smith, Adams, & Harwood, 2011,). I have spearheaded the training of my teachers in digital media literacy and continue to lead my school on educating our elementary aged students on this literacy. “Digital literacy is less about tools and more about thinking” (Johnson, Smith, Adams, & Harwood, 2011, pg 5). I strive to educate and model appropriate behaviors with lessons for students and for teachers. I work with my campus design team to create innovative lessons that exemplify students’ choice. With my team’s help, we reiterate with our teachers the importance of student engagement and products. “Technology can and should support individual choices about access to material and expertise, amount and type of educational content, and methods of teaching” ” (Johnson, Smith, Adams, & Harwood, 2011, pg 5). As part of the district technology planning team, I assisted in the district initiative called “Bring You Own Device” and helped author the policy for students to allow them to begin using their own devices responsibly on district campuses. “Mobiles, especially smartphones and tablets, enable ubiquitous access to information, social networks, tools for learning and productivity, and hundreds of thousands of custom applications” (Johnson, Smith, Adams, & Harwood, 2011, pg 6).

My personal vision of leadership is that I will endeavor to be an ethical leader who knows the importance of being a lifelong learner, who works with others to enhance professional development, who uses data based decisions to enhance the topics for enrichment, and who ensures others feel valued and appreciated when working with me.

As technology leaders we must understand that our students are the end users of the technology and the main purpose for our efforts. “Our students are no longer ‘little versions of us,’ as they may have been in the past. In fact, they are so different from us that we can no longer use either our 20th century knowledge or our training as a guide to what is best for them educationally” (Prensky, 2005, p. 8). Technology continues to be reinvented and as educators and leaders we need to guide our teachers towards best practices in education. We must recognize and embrace the differences between the educator and the student. We must help the teachers through leadership, training, and by example the appropriate use of technology with this generation.

**Learning a Lesson**

Before beginning my coursework with Lamar I considered collaboration easily attained if I was meeting with a group of people. In several courses at Lamar I was subjected to collaboration with class mates who were all over the state. My view of collaboration was completely shattered. While working with a team during my course in EDLD 5364 Teaching with Technology, I completely revised my thoughts on collaboration during an assignment where we had to create a detailed lesson. Utilizing Web 2.0 tools, my group was able to meet and truly work as a team. Developing the solution for the assignment allowed us to explore different kinds of technology activities that would allow students to showcase what they’ve learned.  It also afforded the opportunity to explore the best ways to assess student learning.  As Solomon and Schrum (2007) point out, “it makes much more sense to have ongoing assessment . . . known as ‘formative evaluation’” (p. 169).  We tried to incorporate this kind of assessment into our lesson strategies.

I learned that collaboration is only hampered by our own limitations. I now encourage my teachers to work with other schools and others outside of our country. As Richardson (2005) pointed out, "Success never relies on one person" (pg. 35). My teachers have been eager to embrace this idea of collaboration. James Paul Gee said in the video *Grading with Games*, “Next will be schooling that will address the ability to solve problems, but not just to solve problems, but to be able to do it collaboratively, so that you can work in a group where the group is smarter than the smartest person in the group” (Edutopia, nd).

I have always been a proponent of rubrics but through my coursework at Lamar I value rubrics more. Educators need to find innovative ways to evaluate students. Rubrics are an excellent way to support a grading system in a way that enables students to understand the scoring. The purpose for rubrics is to help students understand the criteria as pertaining to an objective seen as important. Although rubrics can be subjective, it aids the teacher with grading. Multiple assessments are an effective way for educators to ensure the content is curriculum based. "Most traditional assessments are detached from instruction and practice" (Rose & Meyer, 2002, ch. 7.4). Rubrics help to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom if utilized correctly.

Students will understand the grading system and will help students have a positive emotional and social connection with the class when rubrics are utilized. As Linda Darling-Hammond stated, the best teachers are “emotionally intelligent" (Edutopia.org, 2007). We need to ensure we have a positive atmosphere for not only the children but for ourselves as educators. Social and emotional learning in school is important so that school is not just cognitive. This type of learning is more than just getting along and social skills. This concept of social learning also enables teachers to support themselves as social and emotional learners. During Teaching with Technology through with Lamar, I was able to build a group where these concepts were key to our group dynamics. We utilized Skype, chat, telephone, e-mail, and Google Docs to stay connected with each other.

My concepts for integration have been reinforced while conducting coursework for my Master’s Degree. "For computers to be effective teaching tools, teachers must thread computer use into group projects, whole-class demos, individual tutoring, classroom management, and alternative assessment and testing along with the traditional teaching methods of lecturing, reading and hands-on activities and experiments" (Price, B. 2005, pg. 53). I have learned ways to utilize technology more sufficiently which will enhance the education of the children at my school. “For computers to be effective teaching tools, teachers must thread computer use into group projects, whole-class demos, individual tutoring, classroom management, and alternative assessment and testing along with the traditional teaching methods of lecturing, reading and hands-on activities and experiments” (Price, 2005, pg 53). In a constructivist approach, students can easily use a 2-4 classroom computer set up. Most elementary teachers have grasped the concept of stations/centers in their classrooms.

Reeves (2007) states, “Meaningful school improvement begins with cultural change-and cultural change begins with the school leader” (pg. 94). The school I am currently employed has a principal who holds every teacher to a very high standard. We have students who are going to be successful so the principal ensures that we all understand that mediocrity is not allowed. Through my coursework at Lamar I am able to appreciate the bureaucratic responsibilities imposed upon my principal. I can empathize more with the daily demands of an administrator.

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